



FIRST THINGS FIRST

The right system for bright futures

**QUALITY FIRST! ASSESSMENT GRANT
REQUEST FOR GRANT APPLICATION
RFGA # FTF-STATE-09-QUAL-0001-00
FACT SHEET**

WHAT IS THE QUALITY FIRST! ASSESSMENT GRANT?

First Things First will fund a successful applicant to implement particular components of a comprehensive quality improvement and rating system (QIRS) for Arizona's early care and education community serving children birth through age five. The system developed for Arizona is named "Quality First!". Quality early care and education is a national issue critical to long-term success for Arizona's children. Research continues to identify several interwoven factors that affect the quality of care children receive and the impacts on their development and long-term education and health.

First Things First has developed Quality First! to include the following components:

- Assessment of early care and education centers and homes (RFGA #FTF-STATE-09-QUAL-0001-00)
- Coaching and consultation go assist centers and homes to improve their level of quality (RFGA #FTF-STATE-09-QUAL-0002-00)
- Specific linkages with the First Things First T.E.A.C.H. (Teachers Education and Compensation Helps) program to promote professional development
- Specific linkages with the First Things First Child Care Health Consultation (CCHC) program
- Incentives to achieve stated quality improvement goals (RFGA #FTF-STATE-09-QUAL-0002-00)
- Assignment of ratings for child care centers and homes (to be implemented in 2010)

The goal of this funding opportunity is to provide a means for comprehensive assessment of program quality within licensed child care centers, licensed group homes, certified child care homes, and regulated tribal and military programs. (Assessment refers to a research-based, consistent method of observing and analyzing the physical and interpersonal environment in which children are served, and reporting the results of that analysis.)

The assessment tools to be used by the successful Applicant have been pre-determined by a First Things First Quality First! workgroup of community stakeholders. These include the CLASS (Classroom

Assessment Scoring System) and the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) instruments (ECERS-R, ITES-R and FCCERS), as well as other checklists to collect information which will inform quality improvement and eventually lead to a voluntary rating.

WHAT WILL THE REQUEST FOR GRANT APPLICATION (RFGA) FUND?

This grant opportunity will fund the assessment component of the overall statewide system. The program funded under this grant opportunity is required to collaborate with the successful grant recipient(s) of RFGA # FTF-STATE-09-QUAL-0002-00 who will administer the Coaching and Incentives components and must collaborate with First Things First, who will provide oversight and evaluation of the entire system. The successful Applicant will also be required to participate on the Quality First! Advisory Group to develop tools, templates, standard procedures and other key operational and training requirements.

Beyond the initial assessment, this funding opportunity seeks to provide ongoing assessment after coaching has been provided and initial recommendations are implemented.

The program (or the successful Applicant) funded under this opportunity should consider:

- The unique needs of each type of center or home where services are delivered.
- The unique cultural, linguistic and socio-economic needs of the children served.
- The need for clear, concise, measurable results to be based on empirical evidence.
- The need for generally-accepted measures of quality to be addressed in both initial and ongoing assessment.
- The need for the highest level of reliability among personnel conducting the assessment
- The requirement for regular inter-rater reliability checks with trained supervisor and/or other Assessors to maintain 85% reliability among Assessors.
- The need to travel to the Phoenix First Things First Office at least five times during the first contract period for initial training on the assessment tools, Information Technology System, Evaluation Requirements and on-going training and technical assistance.

WHAT IS THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF FUNDING AVAILABLE?

This is a seven (7) month contract with an option for renewal for two additional 12-month periods. Total funds available for the Assessment Contract will not exceed \$800,000 for the first funding period and \$1,200,000 for each of the remaining two years (\$3,200,000 total for the entire term of this project). Contract renewal will be contingent upon satisfactory contract performance, evaluation and availability of funds.

The anticipated contract period for any resultant grant will be December 8, 2008 to June 30, 2008.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR THESE FUNDS?

Pursuant to Arizona Revised Statute 41-2701, "Grant" means the furnishing of financial or other assistance, including state funds or federal grant funds, by any state governmental unit to any "person" for the purpose of supporting or stimulating educational, cultural, social or economic quality of life. "Person" means any corporation, business, individual, committee, club or other organization or group of individuals.

The Applicant must demonstrate successfully the ability to meet the requirements described in the RFGA.

PROPOSED TIMELINE FOR THE GRANT MAKING PROCESS

September 12, 2008	Notice of Intent/Fact Sheet available to the public
September 15, 2008	RFGA available on-line
September 26, 2008	Pre-application Conference First Things First, 8 th floor board room, 1:00 p.m. -3:00 p.m. at 4000 N. Central Ave., Ste. 800, Phoenix, AZ 85012
October 27, 2008	Applications due to the First Things First office by 3:00 p.m.
December 8, 2008	Anticipated grant awards made

HOW TO GET A COPY OF THE RFGA.

Please visit the First Things First web site on or after September 15, 2008: <http://www.azftf.gov>

QUESTIONS?

All questions must be submitted in writing to the Grants and Contracts Procurement Specialist via fax (602) 265-0009 or grants@azftf.gov.